

From: Susie Veglia [mailto:sveglia@portandharbor.com]
Sent: Tuesday, May 19, 2009 9:19 AM
To: EBSA, E-OHPSCA - EBSA
Subject: Equal Insurance Treatment for Mental Health Issues

Hi,

I'm pleased to have the opportunity to comment on this.

We have a policy concerning first time offenders of our drug and alcohol policy. In lieu of termination they may elect mandatory assessment and treatment through our employee assistance program. The first three sessions are free to the employee, but if continued counseling is recommended, it can become a "sentence" to the employee, who may have to dig very deeply to afford the treatment. After the deductible is met, the employee receives a 50% benefit per session up to a maximum of \$1500. This creates an uneven "playing field." The wealthier employees have more spending power to afford the mandated counseling and preserve their jobs.

Drug and alcohol abuse are a major factor in our society today; while paying astronomical prices for health insurance, employees are unable to receive suitable benefits to address their mental health problems.

Thank you!

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